

# CommonConcern

A PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD YWCA



World YWCA

**FEATURE:**

HIV and AIDS: What Universal Action Means for Women and Girls

**YOUNG WOMEN ON THE MOVE:**

Natalia Cales: Turning tragedy into inspiration

**HIV AND AIDS:**

Financing and Resourcing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Context of HIV and AIDS

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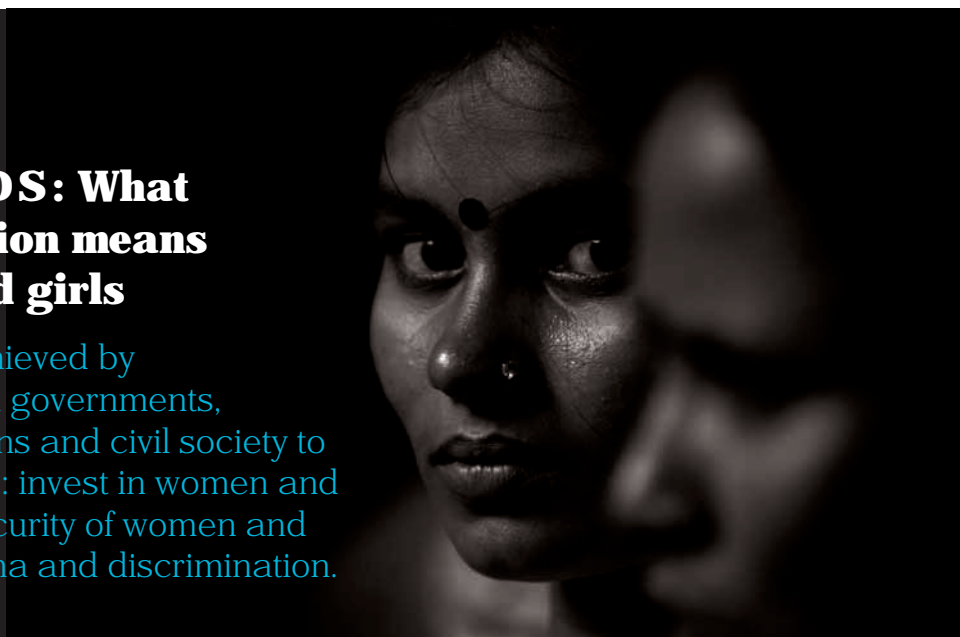
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**President:** Susan Brennan **General Secretary:** Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda **Editor:** Kaburo Kobia **Co-ordinators:** Sarah Davies, Sylvie Jacquat **Distribution:** Fiona Wilkie. Articles may be freely reproduced with acknowledgement to World YWCA Common Concern ISSN 1025-4099. All artwork, images and photography is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without permission. ©2008 World YWCA. Common Concern is published in French and Spanish, contact [worldoffice@worldywca.org](mailto:worldoffice@worldywca.org) to order.



# Editorial

**H**IV and AIDS remains a serious challenge confronting humanity. At a time when the world's attention is drawn to food crisis, energy crisis and climate change, the daily challenges of living with and responding to HIV remain a constant in many communities. An estimated 33.2 million people are living with HIV, of which 15.4 million are women. In sub-Saharan Africa, the feminisation of the pandemic is more evident as nearly 61% of people living with HIV are women. It is a common axiom that HIV and AIDS has a female face—images and stories abound of girls dropping out of school to provide care, grandmothers in poor communities acting as sole providers for orphans and vulnerable children and young women being evicted and blamed for bringing HIV into their home. With limited opportunities for education, lower status in society, and heightened insecurity, many women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are at a higher risk of contracting HIV.

In Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean the epidemic is often limited to groups such as injecting drug users, social minorities and men who have sex with men. Even though the HIV prevalence is dominant among men in these groups, the gender impacts cannot be underestimated. Men living with HIV have relationships with women, too: their mothers, sister, partners and friends. These women are equally affected and the response must therefore be comprehensive.

In August, the XVII International AIDS Conference will call for 'Universal Action Now'. This is an appropriate theme—especially if we are to achieve Universal Access by 2010 as a target set by governments and heads of states through the UN Global Action Plan on HIV and AIDS in 2005. The World YWCA will bring the voices of young people, women and the faith community to the conference held in Mexico.

In this issue of Common Concern, we share information on some of the practical and creative activities YWCAs worldwide have taken in response to HIV. In the feature article, I share the key messages the World YWCA will take to the conference in Mexico, messages that address the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS. The World YWCA proposes three areas for 'universal action now' based on the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action on HIV and AIDS, which was adopted at the International Women's Summit on Leadership on HIV and AIDS.

Susan Brennan, World YWCA President, leads the Take Action section that features personal accounts on how the Call to Action has inspired four women to engage in their community. Through this special issue of Common Concern, we call on each one of you to make a personal commitment to do something each day towards addressing HIV and AIDS especially as it impacts on women and young people. 'Universal action' demands your personal action, too. A major breakthrough in the response to HIV can only be made when individual, community and government responses come together with consistent purpose and vision. ■



**Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda**  
General Secretary, World YWCA

# Briefing

## From YWCAs Around the World

**Since 1999**, the World YWCA has mobilised women and girls in local communities to respond to HIV and AIDS; YWCAs in over 70 countries have developed a solid base of programmes that address the pandemic at multiple levels. In this briefing we highlight some of the HIV and AIDS programmes from YWCAs around the world.



### YWCA OF EGYPT CONFRONTS RELIGIOUS TABOOS

**T**he YWCA of Egypt and the Council of Development affiliated to the Evangelical Church in Egypt are working in partnership to raise awareness on HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among women and girls in Egypt.

The two organisations convened a workshop for 30 women in Shubra, Cairo. The workshop 'Together against HIV and AIDS' addressed some of the myths surrounding HIV. "Mostly illiterate women attended the workshop, we tried to give them basic knowledge about HIV," says Lilly Attalah, General Secretary YWCA of Egypt. "Through the help of a gynecologist, the women received guidance on personal hygiene and information on the importance of using condoms." According to UNICEF, 30% of married women in remote rural areas in Egypt have STIs. Although HIV prevalence is low in Egypt, lack of information on HIV and sexually transmitted infections in schools and public health facilities put young people and women at risk.

The high level of stigma associated with HIV limits testing, which is very low in Egypt. Further workshops are planned for Alexandria, Minia and Assiut. "We can reach the whole community through this partnership (Evangelical Church and the YWCA of Egypt) and really discuss some religious taboos concerning HIV," says Attalah.



**YWCA of Naucalpan, Mexico** holds youth friendly workshops to empower young women with HIV prevention skills.

## YWCA OF MEXICO WORKSHOP INTRODUCES FEMALE CONDOMS TO COMMUNITY

**E**ducating and informing women and young women in Mexico about HIV prevention has proved to be a journey of self-discovery for members of the YWCA of Naucalpan, Mexico. “When we started our work we had to eliminate our own fears about sexuality and start working on our personal growth,” says Claudia Vázquez Izquierdo, Board Member of the YWCA of Naucalpan.

The YWCA of Naucalpan has worked on HIV and AIDS programmes since 2005. The association offers workshops on personal development, safe sex and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) with a strong focus on female and male condoms. Among their prevention efforts, the association provides staff at Telmex, the largest cellular phone company in Mexico, with HIV-prevention training.

Although Mexico is home to 11% of people living with HIV in Latin America, Mexico’s epidemic has levelled off somewhat in recent years. The epidemic is still largely concentrated among men who have sex with men, but there has been a gradual shift towards higher infection rates among injecting drug users and women.

After members of the YWCA of Naucalpan attended an HIV workshop three years ago, they made a decision to share their information with other woman and girls. “We started looking for women willing to learn and listen to what we had to say on HIV prevention,” says Izquierdo, “We provided these services for free and started exchanging

programmes with other organisations that allowed us to reach many women and girls.”

As their outreach work started to grow, they began to realise the importance of understanding themselves in order to help others. “We realised we had to work on ourselves to improve our knowledge and skills to be able to respond to women’s needs and questions, not only on HIV but also on sexuality, violence against women and self esteem issues,” Izquierdo reveals.

As part of their prevention programme, they teach women and young women how to use the female condom. “We had to go to sex shops to get some of our material to make a comprehensive demonstration on the use of condoms. In order to show how the female condom is used, we must use very visual material,” says Izquierdo, “We have had to overcome many cultural barriers to talk freely about sex, the human body and condoms.”

The association has facilitated workshops on the female condom for young women in an engaging and youth friendly style to empower young people to develop advocacy skills around HIV prevention. “We think the secret in helping young women is just to get involved and commit to educating and informing them with knowledge,” says Izquierdo, “It will empower them to make better decisions about their health—and ultimately improve their lives.”

## YWCA OF SALEM INDIA USES MOVIE ACTOR TO DISCUSS HIV PREVENTION

In India, stigma and discrimination keep many people from visiting voluntary, counselling and testing services. Yet, UNAIDS estimates that at least 2.5 million people in India are living with HIV, about a quarter of which are women. The YWCA of Salem, India has designed a programme that challenges stigma and encourages women in the community to talk about HIV and AIDS. The programme has been implemented in 400 villages and is based on a popular movie actor whose caricature, Ranga, engages with the public and deliver an HIV-prevention message.

The message is delivered from a branded van to over 400 villages, reaching children, women and men with literature on HIV in the local language. On the van are health care providers who speak with members of the community about HIV-prevention and demonstrate how to correctly use condoms. In addition, counselling and HIV testing services are provided from the van.

Though initially hesitant, the response of the community has been tremendous. The ongoing programme has so far reached 13,075 people—demystifying HIV and AIDS and challenging stigma in rural India.

## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP NEEDED IN PACIFIC AIDS RESPONSE

After returning from the World YWCA Council in Nairobi, the YWCA of Aotearoa New Zealand made a decision to become one of the leading voices in the country on HIV and AIDS issues.

"Women, especially young women, can be vulnerable to HIV infection because they are less able to negotiate safe sexual practices than men, especially in situations of domestic and sexual abuse," says former Executive Director of the YWCA of Aotearoa New Zealand Alison Lewin. "Their physiology also makes them more susceptible to contracting HIV through unsafe sex."

To raise awareness of HIV, the YWCA of Aotearoa New Zealand, along with other non-governmental organisations organised a free public screening of the film 'Pills, Profits, Protest' at the City Gallery Cinema in Wellington. "Awareness raising is an important way of breaking down the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS and ensuring people know how to protect themselves against contracting the virus," says Lewin.

The YWCA of Aotearoa New Zealand currently sits on the National Council of Development NGO HIV and AIDS Advocacy Group and has established partnerships with other organisations in New Zealand, such as Positive Women Inc. and the Pacific Island AIDS Foundation to help

address the rising HIV infection rates amongst women and young women. "It is important that we continue to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and girls, including healthy and safe practices that minimise the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections," states Lewin.

## POSITIVE WOMEN REACH OUT TO COMMUNITIES IN GEORGIA

In Georgia, women living with HIV face a lot of stigma and discrimination. It was not until 2004 that reports of new infections began to increase in Georgia; annual increase since then account for over half of all HIV infections. Although the prevalence remains low, analysts note that infections are likely to continue increasing.

In response, the YWCA of Georgia has formed the Women's Positive Group in Batumi, one of three cities recording increased infections. The group, made up of HIV-positive women and women affected by HIV, has reviewed national legislation on HIV and AIDS and participated in a review of the AIDS Bill in Georgia to ensure legal rights for HIV-positive women are addressed.

The Women's Positive Group holds informal meetings with community groups across Georgia to help educate people on HIV and AIDS and challenge stigma and discrimination. On these visits, members of the group also meet with local women living with HIV offering support and sharing experiences.

The group has had an invaluable impact on women living with HIV in Georgia. "The Women's Positive Group is really acquainted with the problems positive women face. We get comments like, 'It's so nice you exist. I feel so free and have hope only because of this group,'" says Tamriko Mxatvari, General Secretary of the YWCA of Batumi, Georgia. "All the activities we do are based on the real problems that exist for women living with HIV."

The group has produced a publication documenting their personal testimonies.



**Women at a workshop**  
learn how to correctly use the female condom.

## From the World YWCA

### WORKSHOP PREPARES WOMEN FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCES

**T**he World YWCA represents civil society (women, youth and faith-based groups) on the Conference Coordinating Committee (CCC) of the XVII International AIDS Conference (IAC). World YWCA has committed to increase the participation of women and girls by facilitating a series of workshops that promote and explore the intricacies of the IAC. The workshops have been held in Mexico, Ghana and Albania.

World YWCA outreach workshops have increased general awareness of IACs and built specific skills on developing communication products, strategic planning and advocacy. Tailored to meet local realities, the workshops trained participants to effectively communicate the challenges and successes of their HIV programmes.

The first workshop 'Comunicando positivamente' (Communicating positively) was held in Mexico City, from November 21-27, 2007; 26 women from local YWCAs in Latin America participated as well as women from positive women's networks who have partnered with the YWCA.

YWCAs from across Africa gathered in Accra, Ghana for the second workshop, 'The Way Forward – Knowing What Works' from April 28- May 2, 2008. Over 30 women took part including World Board members Alice Mirimo Kabetsi and Lady Comfort Ani. Also at the workshop were organisations such as the African Women's Development Fund, YMCA, Ghana Red Cross, UNFPA and the National AIDS Council of Ghana.

The final outreach workshop 'YWCAs in Europe responding to HIV: regional perspective and strategies for the future' was held in Dures, Albania from July 7-11. In partnership with UNAIDS Albania, The workshop gathered nearly 30 women from throughout Europe to strengthen the work of YWCAs in Europe on HIV and AIDS.

## LIFT TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV, GOVERNMENTS TOLD

The World YWCA, along with over 345 civil society organisations, signed a letter urging governments to eliminate travel restrictions imposed on people living with HIV. The letter, presented to governments during the United Nations High-Level Meeting on AIDS held in New York from June 10-11, also called on governments and the global community to review the progress and performance in achieving universal access to HIV treatment, care, support and prevention by 2010.

More than 70 countries still impose some form of HIV-specific restrictions on entry and residence for people living with HIV. Of these, some 10 countries bar positive people from entering or staying in their country for any reason or length of time. Close to 30 countries deport people once their HIV status is discovered.

The letter highlights how such travel restrictions are unwarranted—especially during international conferences on HIV and AIDS such as the UN High-Level AIDS meeting. People living with HIV are sometimes unable to participate at such conferences as they are denied entry or face lengthy and intrusive application process in order to obtain a special visa waiver.

**For a global database on HIV-related travel restriction visit: [www.hivtravel.org](http://www.hivtravel.org)**

## WORLD YWCA DAY: YOUNG WOMEN HONOURED

The YWCA movement commemorates World YWCA Day on April 24. With associations in 125 countries, the day invites members of the movement to celebrate its global reach and diversity. The theme for this year's World YWCA Day was 'Listen to she who speaks: women leading change'. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, World YWCA General Secretary in a video message illustrates the importance of listening to the stories of the women who inspire us. "Listen to your YWCA membership with their vision, ideas and knowledge," Gumbonzvanda encouraged, "Listen to your volunteers as they give their time, talents and treasures and listen to your staff as they endeavour to build the movement with quality and professional attention to their work."

Gumbonzvanda called on the movement to honour and recognise women leaders in their community and particularly to honour young women by making a donation to the Power to Change Fund, a permanent fund to build the leadership of women and girls.

**Views photos from YWCA around the world: [www.worldywca.org](http://www.worldywca.org)**

## DONATIONS HELP YWCA OF MYANMAR PROVIDE AID AFTER CYCLONE NARGIS

Villagers in the Delta region of Myanmar have received much needed support from the YWCA of Myanmar. The villagers are survivors of Cyclone Nargis that killed about 78,000 people and left 56,000 missing. The United Nations estimates that up to 2.4 million people have been severely affected.

The YWCA of Myanmar is participated in humanitarian efforts. "We are helping people with the donations which we have received. Presently, we can help about 1000 people," says Daw Aye Kywe, General Secretary of the YWCA of Myanmar.

Staff and volunteers of the YWCA of Myanmar are also working in Yangon with street children in desperate need of aid. "They especially need help with daily food, drinking water, shelter, clothes and medicine. We are helping as much as we can," says Kywe.

**For ways to support the YWCA of Myanmar effort visit [www.worldywca.org](http://www.worldywca.org) or email [worldoffice@worldywca.org](mailto:worldoffice@worldywca.org)**

## iAIDS.ORG: NEW WEBSITE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT HIV

The World YWCA has joined UNICEF, TakingITGlobal (TIG), the Global Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS (GYCA) as one of the pioneer organisations on iAIDS.org—a new website that offers young people a platform to connect, learn, and advocate on topics related to HIV and AIDS. iAIDS.org, launched at the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico, offers two main features: organising tools and a community workspace designed to help young people share information and build stronger networks and communities. The organising tools include group managers, mailing lists, calendars and blogs; the wiki based workspace allows users to create their own content, share knowledge and resources, upload stories based on their experiences, and document events like the Mexico International AIDS Conference.

Stories and articles from the YWCA publication 'If I Kept It To Myself' are now featured on the 'Our Stories and Heroes' section of the site. Young women who participated in the Young Women's Forum during the World YWCA Council in 2007 have signed up as pilot members of iAIDS.org. Join them online today—visit iAIDS.org, create an account and a profile and get comfortable with the site! Explore contributions made by young people from around the world, share your experience and view and upload photos.

### Partners:

- **Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA)** is the leading youth organisation for HIV and AIDS advocacy



As the political crisis in Zimbabwe deepens, women and girls remain the most affected by the violence and poverty

and holder of the UN mandate on young people and HIV and AIDS, with more than 4,000 youth leaders and adult allies in 150 countries.

- **TakingITGlobal** has 198,000 members in 261 countries and is a premier resource for virtual organising, recognised as on the cutting edge of the youth online advocacy movement.
- **UNICEF is the United Nation Children's Fund**, the world's leading advocate for children's rights, recognised around the world and with operations in 190 countries.

## STOP THE VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE, PROTECT WOMEN AND GIRLS

The World YWCA presented a statement at the 8th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) calling for an end to violence against women and girls in Zimbabwe. Helene Yinda, World YWCA Programmes Director for Africa and the Middle East, presented the statement on behalf of over 30 co-signatories before the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, representatives of member states and non-governmental organisations. The statement called on the Council to address the use of violence against women and girls as a weapon of war, to ensure women's human rights are protected and provide humanitarian assistance to displaced people and rural communities in Zimbabwe as a matter of urgency.

The YWCA of Zimbabwe has been providing shelter for displaced women and children in Harare. But constant

intimidation and threats have hampered their efforts to provide a safe space. In the most recent incident, police invaded the association's hostel. Despite attempts to intervene, the police forcibly took the 125 women and children taking refuge at the hostel. The women and children were found the next day at a bus terminal in Bindura, 70 kilometres outside Harare, with their blankets taken away.

The World YWCA has been responding to the situation in Zimbabwe in partnership with the World Christian Students Federation (WSCF) and other ecumenical partners calling for peace and security, protection of women and young people, humanitarian aid and inclusion of women and youth in the search for a solution to the political crisis.

**For more information on how to help the ongoing efforts visit: [www.worldywca.org](http://www.worldywca.org)**

# Feature

## **HIV and AIDS: What Universal Action means for women and girls**

**In July 2005**, leaders of the Group of Eight (G8) countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the US) pledged to achieve universal access to antiretroviral treatment worldwide by 2010. Two months later, United Nations Member States endorsed this goal by committing themselves to **“Developing and implementing a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010 for all those who need it.”**<sup>1</sup>

This year marks the midpoint towards the 2010 global target on reaching universal access for HIV and AIDS treatment, prevention, care and support.



The International AIDS Conferences are by far the largest and most comprehensive gatherings of organisations focused on HIV. The theme for this year's International AIDS Conference—Universal Action Now—emphasises the need for continued urgency in the worldwide response to HIV and AIDS, and for action on the part of all stakeholders at the global, national, regional and local levels<sup>2</sup>. Women and girls have been demanding for a qualitative approach to universal action that places them at the centre of the AIDS response. Evidence shows that gender inequality and discrimination are an underlying cause for the increased vulnerability that put women and girls at risk<sup>3</sup>. Global HIV statistics highlight that HIV prevention needs to be dramatically scaled up—especially for women and girls. In many regions of the world a feminisation of the pandemic has taken place, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the prevalence of HIV in any community, including injecting drug users and men who have sex with men has implications for women and girls—as it is almost always women who carry the burden of care.

For Universal Access to be achieved by 2010 the World YWCA calls on governments, intergovernmental organisations and civil society to urgently take three key actions: invest in women and girls, ensure the safety and security of women and girls and end stigma and discrimination.

## INVEST IN WOMEN AND GIRLS

As the pandemic becomes more feminised, it is important for world leaders to build on the capacity and leadership of women and girls at the frontline of the HIV response. Investing in women and girls means providing quality information on sexual and reproductive health to enable them to make informed decisions in an environment that allows them to exercise their rights. The backbone of this investment is ensuring that girls have access to education and are allowed to remain in school. Studies show that HIV prevalence is at least twice as high among young people who do not finish primary school<sup>4</sup>; yet, in Sub-Saharan Africa, where prevalence is at its highest, only 28% of girls are enrolled in secondary school<sup>5</sup>. Education can be a long term HIV prevention method.

Investment also means provision of adequate, accessible and flexible financial resources to communities in ways that empower women and reduce gender inequality. Basic services must be made available—services like primary health care, comprehensive and sustainable HIV treatment, household food security, free and affordable education and access to portable water. Provision of these services help reduce the disproportionate

responsibility of care often ascribed to women and girls. Securing women's property rights, income, and decent work are additional targeted measures that reduce risk and vulnerability.

## ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

As long as women in their households, communities, schools and nations remain vulnerable to sexual and gender based violence, they remain vulnerable to contracting HIV. In a study on intimate partner violence, the World Health Organisation and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS refer to several reports that reveal a three fold increases in risk of HIV among women who have experienced violence compared to those who have not<sup>6</sup>. Domestic violence reduces the possibilities for partners to negotiate safe sex. The YWCA movement has, for several decades, provided shelter and counseling services for survivors of violence and is committed to eliminating violence against women and girls.

During armed conflict, sexual violence is frequently used as a weapon of war, leaving many women traumatised and

The World YWCA, inspired by the understanding and urgency of achieving Universal Access by 2010, convened the first international conference on women's leadership and HIV and AIDS in July 2007. The International Women's Summit on Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS united over 2000 people, mostly women, including HIV positive and young women, to deliberate on how to address gender dimensions of the pandemic and define key action points. Over

**4000** people have since signed the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action and accompanying pledge for action adopted at the Summit.

In 2007, an estimated 15.4 million women were living with HIV—a 1.6 million increase from 2001. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost

# 61%

of adults living with HIV in 2007 were women, while in the Caribbean that percentage was 43% (compared with 37% in 2001). The proportions of women living with HIV in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe are slowly growing, as HIV is transmitted to the female partners of men who are likely to have been infected through injecting drug use, or during unprotected paid sex or sex with other men. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, it is estimated that women accounted for 26% of adults with HIV in 2007 (compared with 23% in 2001), while in Asia that proportion reached 29% in 2007 (compared with 26% in 2001).

often infected with HIV and other STIs. The World YWCA welcomes the recent adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 on Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Armed Conflict that condemns sexual and other forms of violence committed against civilians in armed conflict, in particular women and children. Civil and international conflicts can expand the spread of HIV, UNAIDS points out in its Security and Human Rights AIDS Response<sup>7</sup> policy. Preventing violence is in itself HIV prevention.

## END STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

After 25 years of HIV, stigma and discrimination continue to drive the HIV pandemic. Stigma and discrimination must be eradicated. We must offer solidarity and support to all women and girls, particularly those infected and affected by HIV. Promises such as Universal Access Now have been made, yet we still wait for change on many different levels as the human rights of people living with HIV continue to be violated. Today, over 70 countries still impose some form of HIV-specific restrictions on entry and residency for people living with HIV. HIV-related travel restrictions are a violation of human rights and must be eliminated. Laws that criminalise HIV transmission further fuel stigma and have a negative effect on public health.

Achieving Universal Access by 2010 demands multi-level actions by diverse partners. Accountability to action should be measured by the quality of laws and policies that governments adopt, the quality of programmes that are put in place, the extent to which financial resources support programmes that promote gender equality and women's empowerment and the extent women, girls and HIV-positive women are included in decision-making. ■

**Words by: Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, World YWCA General Secretary**

1 Outcome Document from the 2005 World Summit

2 XVII International AIDS Conference

3 Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS: Critical Intersections Intimate Partner Violence and HIV/AIDS Information Bulletin Series, Number 1

4 Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA). 2005. Educate Girls Fight AIDS briefing. Geneva

5 UNICEF The State of the World's Children, 2008. New York

6 Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS: Critical Intersections Intimate Partner Violence and HIV/AIDS Information Bulletin Series, Number 1

7 UNAIDS, Security and Human Rights AIDS Response website

# Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS The Nairobi 2007 Call to Action

DECLARATION & SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR  
IMPLEMENTATION MADE AT THE WORLD YWCA  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S SUMMIT, JULY 2007

We affirm the human rights of women and girls and recognise that the realisation of these rights is critical to an effective response to the global AIDS pandemic and the future of our world. We commit to lead change in our communities to transform the lives of women and girls everywhere, especially those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. We believe that women's leadership is essential in changing the course of this pandemic.

The Nairobi 2007 Call to Action builds on the commitments made by others before us<sup>1</sup> and key strategies identified by members of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS. Central to these are promoting the leadership of women and girls, securing their human rights, ensuring women's equitable representation in decision making and expanding resources for women.

By taking leadership into our hands and uniting in strength as a movement of women, we can lead the change we wish to see in the world. We unite in solidarity regardless of HIV status, age, creed, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or ethnicity. We do this because we care about ourselves, our families and our communities.

We commit to create and sustain change for women and girls, particularly those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. We will achieve change individually through our thoughts, words and actions, and collectively with our families, friends, colleagues, faith groups and communities as part of the global women's movement.

<sup>1</sup>These include ICW's 12 statements 1992, the Barcelona Bill of Rights of 2002, the NGO Code of Conduct, the Canadian Blueprint document of 2006 and the Johannesburg Position on HIV/AIDS and Women's and Girls' Rights in Africa, 2006, With Women Worldwide Compact to End HIV/AIDS, 2006, and the Panama Declaration of 2006. These and other documents may be found on the World YWCA website.



World YWCA

**International Women's Summit:**  
Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS July 4-7  
World YWCA Council July 2007 ●●●



# Kenya2007

Changing Lives Changing Communities

## The Nairobi 2007 call to action

We seek to create change in ten key areas for action that are based on existing knowledge and evidence about the life experiences of women and girls around our world, particularly those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. The ten critical actions for change are:

- 1.** Developing the leadership of women and girls to respond to HIV and AIDS, overcome stigma and discrimination and offer solidarity and support to all women and girls and particularly those infected and affected by HIV
- 2.** Ensuring the meaningful involvement of women infected and affected by HIV in relevant decision making, respecting their right to self determination and enabling their participation in the development of AIDS strategies, programming and decision making bodies
- 3.** Promoting gender equality and the human rights of women and girls including laws that protect these rights, education of those who must uphold them and services that enable women to claim our rights
- 4.** Working to ensure the physical, sexual and psychological safety and security of women and girls in all aspects of their lives
- 5.** Promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and girls, including healthy and safe practices that minimise the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and expansion of female initiated HIV prevention methods
- 6.** Ensuring education, economic security and access to resources for women and girls including the right to own and inherit property

- 7.** Expanding access to services for women infected and affected by HIV, including safe voluntary testing, care, treatment and support as well as expanded services for wider voluntary community testing

- 8.** Preventing new HIV infections among young women and children by protecting their human rights and revising existing AIDS strategies to respond to the reality of their lives

- 9.** Advocating for increased resources to support the capacity of women to lead change on HIV and AIDS and recognising the valuable assets that women and girls bring to the response

- 10.** Promoting the participation, empowerment and leadership of women at all levels of society including equitable representation of women at the highest levels of national political, executive, legislative and judicial structures around the world

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ON HIV AND AIDS

Our leadership can change our world. We commit to advance these ten critical actions to create change in the lives of women and girls around the world and particularly those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. We pledge to turn these words into action.

**World YWCA International Women's Summit: Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS Nairobi, July 7, 2007**



# my pledge of

# action

change begins with me!

I pledge to do everything in my capacity to respond positively, proactively and practically to the unprecedented challenges presented by the global AIDS pandemic.

## IN MY OWN LIFE

- > I will continually challenge my beliefs, question my negative assumptions, and confront the seeds of discrimination, prejudice and stigma that perpetuate the spread of HIV
- > I will use thoughts and words which are inclusive and respectful of others, seeking to build on what unites us and not what divides us
- > I will reach out and make connections with those most disenfranchised and affected by HIV, always questioning motives for my actions and showing empathy

## IN MY HOME, WORKPLACE & FRIENDSHIPS

- > I will support others to overcome negative beliefs, attitudes and practices towards HIV and AIDS and people living with the virus
- > I will increase my awareness and that of others about the presence and relevance of HIV and AIDS in all of our communities
- > I will uphold the human rights of all women and girls
- > I will challenge all forms of gender inequality, racism and other forms of social, economic, political and legal injustice

- > I will confront individual behaviours and institutional strategies that place women and girls at risk of violence and HIV infection

## IN MY COUNTRY

- > I will create meaningful spaces for the issues and views of women and girls living with HIV and their carers to be heard and included
- > I will encourage service providers working on HIV and AIDS to prominently, openly and conscientiously promote equality in all that they do
- > I will commit my time and resources to organisations working toward a better future for women and girls, and especially those working to address the impact of HIV and AIDS on women and girls



International Women's Summit:  
Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS July 4-7  
World YWCA Council July 2007

# Kenya2007

Changing Lives Changing Communities



World YWCA

By signing this pledge I commit myself to be an agent of the change I wish to see in the world through all I think, say and do.

name \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

# Take Action

## Nairobi 2007 Call to Action: Turning words into action

**The Nairobi 2007 Call to Action on HIV and AIDS** was launched at the International Women's Summit on Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS hosted by the World YWCA in July 2007. Based on existing knowledge and evidence about the life experience of women and girls around the world, the Call to Action identifies 10 key areas that if addressed will drastically reduce the prevalence of HIV among women and girls. We asked women around the world who signed the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action to reflect on how they are turning their pledge into action.



### SUSAN BRENNAN, PRESIDENT WORLD YWCA AUSTRALIA

**T**he power of the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action lies in its call to individual and collective action. We are all personally committed to challenge ourselves and others to respond to HIV and AIDS. It's up to every one of us to listen, to learn, to advocate and to make change happen every single day—at home, at work and in our communities.

For me, this has meant forging a special friendship with an HIV positive teenager who challenges stereotypes about HIV on a daily basis. She has faced discrimination from schools and from doctors demonstrating how hidden HIV is in our community. She made me realise HIV is an issue for women in Australia, too. From her, I learnt to stop asking how someone "got HIV". Now, whenever I speak about the priorities of the YWCA, I talk about the vulnerability of young women to HIV and the influence young women have in halting its spread.

I have supported the activities of the leading organisation for HIV-positive women in Australia by attending their picnics

*For me, this has meant forging a special friendship with an HIV positive teenager who challenges stereotypes about HIV on a daily basis.*



**Hon Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Deputy President of South Africa and Dr Musimbi Kanyoro, former General Secretary of the World YWCA, speak about the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action at a press conference in Nairobi, Kenya. July 2007.**

in public parks and a powerful photographic exhibition by positive women. The young men and women in my family now expect birthday gifts such as t-shirts, stationery and other literature raising awareness of HIV. My local YWCA partnered with a condom manufacturer to distribute a new brand of condoms innovatively marketed to women, which I distribute to my friends and family—even to my fellow World YWCA Board members.

During Advent, I used the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance devotions on HIV. I invited friends, family and colleagues to reflect on how violence against women, poverty and gender inequality fuel the spread of the pandemic, and how discriminatory and judgemental attitudes about sexuality are part of the problem. I tell the story shared by the pastor in an Evangelical African Church who preached that AIDS was a punishment from God until she was diagnosed with HIV and ostracised by her congregation and her village. She is now an inspiring advocate for inclusion, compassion and equal access to treatment.

I want all YWCAs to create safe spaces for HIV posi-

tive women to participate as equal and accepted peers, to speak out and to lead. Through our leadership activities, training centres, sex education programmes and other work in local communities, YWCAs around the world can build self esteem for all women to negotiate safer sexual relationships, practice acceptance and inclusion, and provide support for carers, orphans and people living with HIV. As World YWCA President, I rededicate myself to our global commitment to HIV to ensure a response to HIV that is part of our local, national, regional and global work.

## CONSTANCE SHUMBA, WORLD YWCA BOARD MEMBER AND INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SPECIALIST ZIMBABWE

**A**fter signing the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action, I started a Girls' Educational project in Koboko, Uganda. The project assists talented but disadvantaged young girls to go to secondary school by providing them with school fees and pocket money. As a young woman I believe strongly that one of the ways to reduce girls vulnerability to HIV is to provide them with opportunities for education.

Feminisation of HIV has created a need to challenge harmful cultural beliefs such as the idea that girls should not be educated. One of the girls in the project came from a home where the father did not believe in education. She now displays so much potential and has a bright future ahead of her. With access to education her life has changed but there are many girls in Africa living her past life.

In my professional life as a public health specialist I want to seek knowledge and ways of improving the health system, including improved financing, so that young women can have access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health services. Change begins with every one of us and we need to address the socio-economic issues that enable disease and find ways to promote health holistically. We must be resilient in taking action until we get the social change we want.

Any response to HIV that recognises, respects and nurtures the potential of women and girls must be encouraged as part of protecting and promoting the human rights of women and girls. Since signing the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action, ensuring women and girls worldwide have access to education and economic security has become an important part of my life.

## SOPHIE DILMITIS, WORLD YWCA HIV AND AIDS COORDINATOR ZIMBABWE

**I** have been living with HIV for 14 years and every time I disclose there is a different reaction. People are stunned, some remain silent and stare in disbelief and some faces automatically show pity. As people living with HIV, every time we speak out, we continue to break the silence surrounding HIV and AIDS and this is important.

Having said this, the reality is that many women living with HIV choose not to disclose. Many times it is not safe, or disclosure could mean facing tiring processes that require special visas to be able to enter a country or even be denied entrance to places. Stigma and discrimination continue to drive this epidemic and we have to make changes on many different levels so human rights are respected and upheld at all costs.



*Any response to HIV that recognises, respects and nurtures the potential of women and girls must be encouraged as part of protecting and promoting the human rights of women and girls*



*As people living with HIV, every time we speak out, we continue to break the silence surrounding HIV and AIDS and this is important.*

The Nairobi 2007 Call to Action highlights that change of any sort happens first at a personal level and can only take place when we challenge our own ignorance and fears, change how we talk about HIV, and encourage others to do the same. HIV-positive people have to start investing in their own lives, so that they may live healthier, more productive and longer lives. This can only happen if we are supported.

It will take a united effort to overcome this epidemic—a community, country, continent and a globe standing together in commitment and strength. Work must begin on an individual level, by looking at our own lives and assessing what our beliefs are about sexuality, HIV and who is at risk. We can start by acknowledging that even if you are not infected, HIV is very much alive in everyday lives and we are all 'living' with it.

### **ALICE WELBOURN, FORMER CHAIR OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS UNITED KINGDOM**

**A**fter the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action was launched, I decided to raise awareness about HIV in my community. I hadn't done this before because, like many HIV-positive activists, I find it hardest to disclose my HIV status in my own neighbourhood. There are over 20,000 positive women in the UK – but only around 20 of us ever speak out in public. Often we are protecting our children from stigma at school and elderly relatives from pain and worry over us, or we are fearful that we may lose a job. Sometimes we fear gossip and finger-pointing. Ironically, one of the greatest ways of encouraging people to become aware of how HIV might one day affect their own lives is lost when we remain secret, invisible and silent in our own communities.

So 2008 was going to be the year I took courage to challenge stereotypes by going public in my local town Exeter, a thriving university city.

I tried to speak out at a film evening for students, but not one student turned up. But, I haven't given up. The conveners of the film evening, also disappointed by the no-show, have resolved to try again – maybe to find ways of introducing the talks and films into the students' curricula.

I am so lucky. I have a wonderful husband and daughter, both HIV-negative, who stand beside me and support my work and loving friends who are always there for me. But I still often find living positively a struggle—although I have none of the immense challenges with relationships and loss that so many positive women have.

I hope the Call to Action has urged people to find out what is happening in their community. Please reach out to any positive women around you who are trying, against so many odds, to make a difference to policy, practice and chronic funding crises. Call me an idealist, but I do believe that by standing together we, as women hand in hand, can change the world. ■



*One of the greatest ways of encouraging people to become aware of how HIV might one day affect their own lives is lost when we remain secret, invisible and silent in our own communities.*

## **Now Online: The Nairobi 2007 Pledge of Action**

Sign the Pledge of Action today to show your commitment to creating sustained changed for women and girls, particularly those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

**[www.worldywca.org](http://www.worldywca.org)**

# Young Women on the Move

## Natalia Cales: Turning tragedy into inspiration

**The face of HIV and AIDS is young, female and black.** No one knows this better than Natalia Cales from the YWCA of Greater Charleston, USA. After losing her mother to an AIDS related illness, Cales went on a mission to educate young women about the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Sarah Davies, World YWCA Communications Assistant, interviewed Cales to find out what drives her.

### HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN ADVOCATING FOR ISSUES ON HIV AND AIDS?

**A**fter experiencing my mother's losing battle with AIDS, it motivated me to become an advocate for others who have been infected and affected by this epidemic. I'm also very passionate about mentoring youth and educating them regarding sexual health issues.

### WHY SHOULD YOUNG WOMEN BE CONCERNED ABOUT HIV AND AIDS?

Young women, especially minority women, are the highest at risk for becoming infected with this HIV. In order for us to respond to this epidemic and protect ourselves, we have to be aware and engaged with this major issue that's impacting us the most. By not being concerned, we are just leaving our lives in the hands of others.

### HAVE YOU EVER FACED STIGMA OR DISCRIMINATION JUST BECAUSE OF YOUR WORK IN HIV AND AIDS?

In regards to my community outreach work, I've received an overwhelming positive response for the community. But, I did experience stigma and discrimination while taking care of my mother. Due to her HIV-positive status, she was stigmatised and discriminated against throughout the community, including family, friends, and even healthcare providers. It was very discouraging and devastating to see my mother being treated like she was nothing. But, through it all, I fought everyday for her until the day she left. I continue to fight in memory of her struggle and for others who have experienced this journey.

### HOW HAS BEING A MEMBER OF THE YWCA USA HELPED YOU IN YOUR WORK?

As a member and a newly elected Board Member of my local YWCA in Charleston, South Carolina, it's been a great experience. I've been able to co-facilitate an HIV and AIDS program with the YWCA Teen Leadership Academy. The program introduces young women (14-15 years old) to sexual health topics, HIV and STIs. They are educated about prevention methods and negotiating skills to better protect themselves from infections.



### **HOW HAS THE YWCA OF USA SUPPORTED YOU IN THE WORK YOU DO?**

I had the wonderful opportunity to receive a national scholarship award from YWCA USA (South Eastern region) to attend the World YWCA Council in 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. Having that experience to travel to Nairobi increased my knowledge about HIV and AIDS and motivated me to continue my work and advocacy.

### **WHAT WAS GOING TO NAIROBI FOR WORLD COUNCIL LIKE? DID IT CHANGE YOU IN ANY WAY?**

Travelling to Nairobi was AWESOME! I'll always remember every moment and intimate detail of that trip for the rest of my life. It changed my life for forever! It helped me realise that many people around the World have the same motivation and determination to continue responding to HIV and AIDS. And, I got a chance to see how people in other countries live. I also participated in 48Fest Kenya an MTV International film competition about HIV and young people. It was AMAZING to say the least.

### **YOU WON THE MTV STAYING ALIVE FOUNDATION AWARD (SAF). WHAT HAS IT MEANT TO YOU?**

Winning the SAF award means a lot to me. This award gives me hope for the future and motivates me to not give up despite any adversities. My non-profit organisation, Carolina Empowerment Group, strives to "Empower People Day by Day" and this award has helped us to provide sexual health education to many young people.

### **WHAT DO YOU HOPE WILL BE THE MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE IN MEXICO?**

I hope the outcomes are very positive, especially from the young participants. I also hope those who are in power will have a better understanding of grassroots organisations' success with HIV prevention initiatives. In addition, I'm looking forward to learning best practices from other individuals and/or agencies. ■

# Leading Change

## Nothing about us without us



**Nothing about us without us:** A report from the HIV Positive Women's Forum' documents the outcomes of the forum. Launched at the XVII International AIDS Conference, the report summarises the key issues raised by speakers and participants and provides recommendations for future meetings of the kind.

The World YWCA in partnership with the International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (ICW) used good feminist principles to organise the Positive Women's Forum (PWF) as part of the International Women's Summit (IWS) on Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS held in Nairobi, Kenya in July 2007. Unlike many other meetings for positive women, the PWF was not an afterthought. As soon as the World YWCA committed to organise the Summit, it felt it was essential to first and foremost provide a safe space for positive women to unite.

The World YWCA and ICW developed an agenda that addressed relevant issues for HIV-positive women and created a safe space to discuss successes and challenges around HIV. The PWF illuminated some of the challenges that have prevented women from asserting their rightful place in HIV and AIDS policy-making. Five key themes guided the discussions:

- Women's leadership and economic empowerment
- Affordable health care and treatment
- Advocacy around gender inequality
- Stigma and discrimination
- Human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights

Through workshops and lively discussions, HIV positive women not only shared stories about rejection and discrimination, but also about our journeys to empowerment. We cried recalling the emotional beating some of us received upon the disclosure of our HIV status, and laughed, at the joy our children bring. We agreed on our need for comprehensive, accessible sexual and reproductive health programmes. This safe place allowed some of us to admit to exercising our sexual rights, expressing more interest in sex, now that we access antiretroviral (ARV) therapies. Others recalled, with anger, sisters for whom ARVs arrived too late. Deploring lack of access to female condoms and lagging research on microbicides, the delegates questioned the ethics of limiting HIV funding to abstinence-based programmes.

During the forum, delegates emphasised the importance of working within a human rights-based framework that acknowledges the role of economic and social conditions of health as they relate to women's vulnerability to HIV. We need to ensure all women have access to comprehensive, accessible sexual and reproductive health programmes including HIV testing, female initiated HIV-prevention technologies and optimal HIV treatment strategies.



**Women participate in a peaceful march** during the International Women's Summit on Women's Leadership and HIV and AIDS, Nairobi, Kenya

**Over 300 HIV-positive women and girls** from around the world gathered in Nairobi on July 4, 2007 for an unprecedented meeting: the Positive Women's Forum. Darien Taylor, Director of the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange and moderator of the closing panel at the Forum, reflects on the historic meeting.

The theme for the International Women's Summit was women's leadership on HIV and AIDS. As a result of the efforts put to organising the PWF, one in four of the 2000 delegates to the Summit was an HIV-positive woman. Many participants who arrived with basic knowledge of HIV took up the challenge of the Nairobi 2007 Call to Action<sup>1</sup> and left vowing to respond to HIV and AIDS in their communities. Delegates affirmed the importance of involving women living with HIV in all aspects of AIDS responses.

The Forum concluded that high-

level investment in the leadership capacities of women living with HIV is needed to ensure we are meaningfully and widely involved in decision-making bodies that conceive policies affecting women. We need to create laws and policies that will protect us against stigma and discrimination. As women with HIV, we must remind ourselves *la lucha continua* (the fight continues); and with every step - we get a little closer. ■

**Words by: Darien Taylor**

**Download report:**

**[www.worldyca.org](http://www.worldyca.org)**

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**Darien Taylor**

**Director of the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange**

<sup>1</sup> The Nairobi 2007 Call to Action was launched at the International Women's Summit, it identifies 10 key areas that if addressed, will drastically reduce the prevalence of HIV among women and girls.

# HIV and AIDS

## Financing and Resourcing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Context of HIV and AIDS

**In June, the United Nations convened** a high-level meeting on HIV and AIDS in New York. The World YWCA, in partnership with UNIFEM, the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, Church World Service and Women Won't Wait, hosted a side event for delegates to the meeting that explored how women's organisations access critical financing for their HIV and AIDS programmes.

**O**ver 250 people from governments, UN agencies, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations attended the event titled 'Financing and Resourcing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of HIV and AIDS'. The outcome document from the event offers several recommendations to ensure HIV and AIDS funding is adequately allocated through flexible and accessible financing mechanisms.

Given that in many regions of the world HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect women and girls, a gender sensitive response must invest in changing social, cultural and economic factors that put women and girls at risk. Panelists to the Financing Gender event stated that investing in women and girls must include allocating flexible and adequate funds to organisations that reach women and girls—providing them with appropriate services and ensuring they have equal opportunities.

The outcome document from the

event concludes that women are mostly found in three areas of national AIDS<sup>1</sup> programmes:

### **1. In prevention strategies that focus on HIV knowledge and condom use**

Although knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention is an important indicator for many youth programmes, young women need more than HIV knowledge to protect themselves—they need access to sexual and reproductive services and skills-building to understand how to negotiate safe sex.

### **2. In treatment programmes that focus on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT)**

PMTCT programmes have been crucial in protecting children from HIV, but often the process fails to meet the mother's needs. Pre-natal care for women living with HIV must be decentralised to promote holistic and accessible services—especially for marginalised women. PMTCT programmes

must be revisited to ensure mothers are not treated as vessels and vectors of HIV. Instead, they must ensure that, through preventing transmission from mother-to-child, the woman is also kept alive.

### **3. In programmes addressing sex work**

Often programmes reaching out to sex workers focus on increasing HIV knowledge raising awareness on prevention and treatment, but they seldom address the underlying cause of sex work or reach out to the men who visit sex workers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **HIV AND AIDS POLICIES SHOULD THEREFORE:**

- Be formulated with the involvement of women, gender experts and women living with HIV
- Align with commitments to gender equality and women's rights, as



Young women need HIV-prevention knowledge as well as skills to negotiate safe sex.

well as national monitoring and evaluation efforts and specific indicators outlined in the 'Three Ones'<sup>2</sup> agreement

- Prioritise community-based actions for prevention and support
- Value and quantify unpaid home-based care, which is mostly done by women. To alleviate the burden of care on women, governments must build infrastructure that provides adequate and accessible care for those who need it and respond to the economic discrepancies of unpaid home-based care.
- Give special attention to resourcing AIDS responses in conflict situations

### PROGRAMME PRIORITIES SHOULD:

- Include HIV prevention programmes that focus on female-controlled prevention methods, such as female condoms and microbicides
- Reflect a human rights-based approach that includes women's human rights such as inheritance rights and right to peace and security

- Invest in a range of initiatives to eliminate violence against women
- Adjust PMTCT programmes to offer better entry points for care, support and treatment for women
- Ensure that male circumcision programmes are complemented by information on condom use and underscore the importance of male responsibility

### FINANCING MECHANISMS SHOULD:

- Review funding structures such as the Global Fund and assess what percentage of funding is allocated to women. Other funding agreements, such as the 'Three Ones' must become more gender specific and integrate indicators on gender equality within the context of HIV.
- Fund the priorities of national governments as well as civil society
- Collaborate with and view civil society as implementers of HIV programmes
- Simplify financing mechanisms to ensure community institutions are able to access funding
- Provide capacity building and

technical support for monitoring and evaluating programmes

- Promote tools, such as gender-responsive budgeting, for planning, programming, monitoring and evaluating HIV and AIDS priorities
- Include women and other civil society in substantive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

To ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment programmes are adequately financed and resourced, governments must fulfil promises—such as the Universal Access by 2010—and be held accountable. Resourcing women's empowerment means providing women with training that is followed by support and skills building for community mobilisation and the opportunity to participate in decision-making. ■

1 AWID 'Where is the money for women's rights?' The Second Fundher Report, June 2007

2 Donors, developing countries and UN agencies committed to strengthening national AIDS responses endorsed the 'Three Ones' principles that aims to achieve the most effective and efficient use of resources, and to ensure rapid action and results-based management. The principles are: one agreed HIV/AIDS Action Framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners; one National AIDS Coordinating Authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate; one agreed country-level Monitoring and Evaluation System.

# XVII International AIDS Conference

## Mexico 2008:

### World YWCA keeps women and girls on the agenda at the XVII International AIDS Conference

**The International AIDS Conference (IAC)** is by far the largest and most comprehensive gathering of organisations focused on HIV. The conference is an important space for communities to address successes and challenges in the AIDS response. As HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect women and girls, the World YWCA will maintain a focus on women and girls throughout the XVII International AIDS Conference.

**T**he World YWCA is committed to ensuring a high and effective participation of women and girls at the IAC and is therefore sending a delegation of 32 women to the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico. Several member associations successfully submitted abstracts and workshop proposals for the conference. Through participation at workshops, satellite sessions and various events, the World YWCA will highlight the challenges women and girls face in the context of HIV and AIDS.

The World YWCA will hold a one-day consultation and training for YWCA representatives on July 30.

#### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION ARE TO:

- Provide women with an opportunity to share their work, including successes and challenges relating to HIV, and discuss HIV related issues women face in their countries
- Offer capacity building related to expressed challenges
- Seek input on World YWCA strategy on HIV and AIDS
- Develop a World YWCA strategy for the conference

The World YWCA will participate in several events at the IAC in Mexico. The events include:

#### ECUMENICAL PRE-CONFERENCE, JULY 31- AUGUST 2

##### The World YWCA will participate in the following sessions:

- Plenary session on the role of the church in addressing gender-based violence and human trafficking
- Workshop: 'Prevention from a Faith-based Perspective - Assessing what works'
- Workshop: All United in Prevention
- Workshop: Best Practice in Preventing HIV in Young Women Through Peer Education

#### INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE, AUGUST 3-8

##### Poster presentations by YWCAs

- World YWCA - International Women's Summit
- World YWCA - Positive Women's Forum.
- YWCA of Kauai - Sexual Violence Prevention Education
- YWCA of Peru - Breaking Barriers of Discrimination Through Computer Skills for Women

##### Satellite session by World YWCA

- Financing and Resourcing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment In the Context of HIV and AIDS

## WORKSHOPS THE WORLD YWCA WILL PARTICIPATE IN:

- Navigating International AIDS Conferences for Beginners
- Developing new leadership amongst young women that effectively responds to HIV (abstract based oral session)
- Who Cares? Psycho-social, Economics and legal challenges for caregivers and strategies for action (abstract based oral session)

## WORLD YWCA REPRESENTATIVES WILL TAKE PART AS PANELLISTS OR CO-FACILITATE WORKSHOPS AT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS:

- Expanding Access to Female Condoms through Strategic Partnerships and Informed Advocacy (CHANGE and UN-FPA)
- Challenges for Women and Girls and HIV and AIDS (FEIM and CHANGE)
- Comprehensive Condom Programming - So Much Potential, Yet so Little Progress (Inter-Agency Task Team on Comprehensive Condom Programming)
- From commitment to action - Implementing effective responses on Gender and AIDS (UNDP)

For additional information visit [www.worldywca.org](http://www.worldywca.org)



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women leading change

The World YWCA is a global movement that reaches 25 million women and girls in 125 countries providing them with the space and skills to develop leadership to achieve justice, peace, security, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment in their community

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